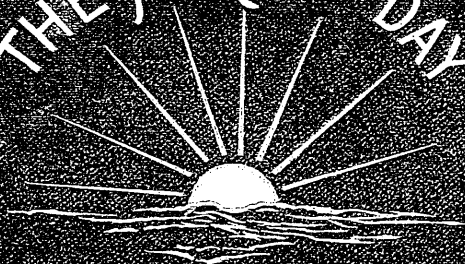


BY  
4580  
\$62

# THE PERFECT DAY

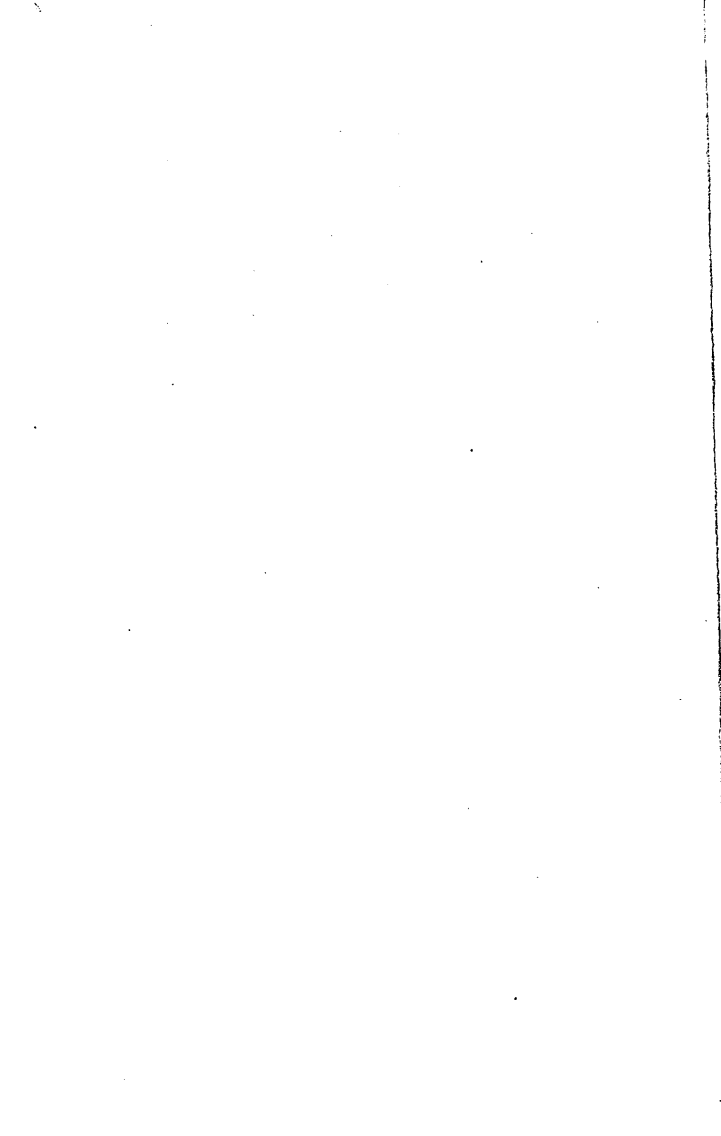


The University of Chicago  
Libraries



DURRETT COLLECTION





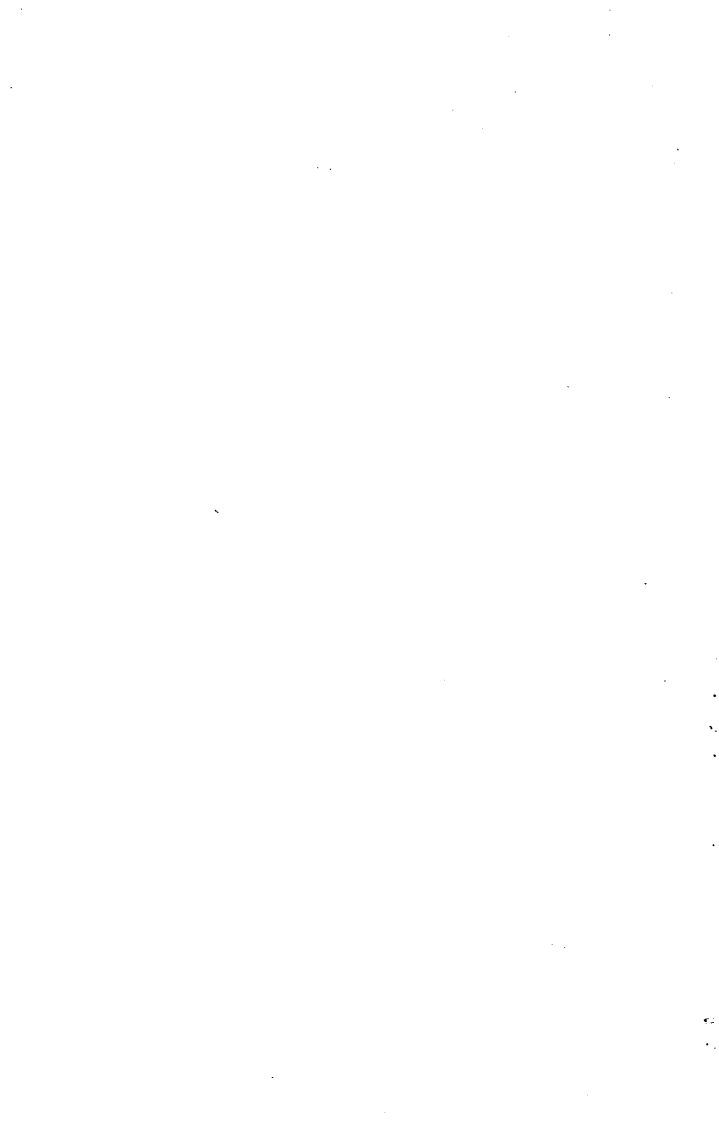
To dear Mrs Butler

with love of her friend

E. J. L. Hudson

April 17, 1887.

"THE PERFECT DAY."



# “The Perfect Day.”

“RESTFUL THOUGHTS

FOR THE

EVENING OF LIFE.”

BY

L. C. SKEY,

AUTHOR OF “COMFORTED OF GOD,” “ALL YOUR CARE,” ETC.

“THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS A SHINING LIGHT, WHICH SHINETH MORE  
AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY.”—*Prov.* XIV. 18.

“MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE, AND I WILL GIVE THEE REST.”  
*Ex.* XXXIII. 14.

London:

SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163, PICCADILLY.

—  
1886.

BV 4580

562

TO THE  
YANGLI OOLAH



473722

## Dedication.

---

TO ALL

AGED SERVANTS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,  
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

IN THE SINCERE HOPE

THAT THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS WRITTEN  
MAY FIND IN IT SOME WORDS OF COMFORT

TO CHEER THEM ON THEIR WAY.

AND IF THERE SHOULD BE ANY TO WHOM IT IS OF USE

I EARNESTLY ASK

THAT THEY WILL REMEMBER ME BEFORE GOD,

AND ASK FOR HIS BLESSING

ON THE WORDS THAT I HAVE WRITTEN.

L. C. SKEY.

*Kensington, May, 1886.*



## Introduction.

---

THE wise man tells us that "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 31); therefore with great reverence for those so nobly crowned, I put together a few simple thoughts, not for their instruction, but I hope for their rest and refreshment when they are feeling tired and worn with their long journey, and when the dimness of their failing sight prevents their seeing how brightly round and above them is shining the light from Heaven, which has guided them all through their pilgrimage, and which has been reflected back again from the clear mirror of their loving souls.

In the eyes of the world old age is the saddest thing to look forward to. Men talk mournfully of "declining years," of "failing powers," of "going down hill," of "having one foot in the grave." Not so the Christian. "Because Thou hast been my helper, therefore under the shadow of Thy wings shall be my refuge" is his joyful song when he feels the feebleness of age coming over him, and knows that his pilgrimage is nearly ended. The grey hairs, which so many lament, are his joy and crown of

rejoicing, there is no "going down hill" for him, for he is daily mounting higher and higher towards the city which God has prepared for him. If his earthly powers become feeble, what matters it when his "inward man is renewed day by day?" If one foot is in the grave, the other is firmly planted on the "Rock" which has overshadowed him in a "dreary land." If his voice has lost the tuneful melody of his youthful days, he is thinking how soon he shall join in the song of the redeemed, and his lips still utter their note of adoration, "I will praise Thee and Thy faithfulness, O God, upon an instrument of music." If his ears are dull to earthly sounds, he can better listen for the angel voices which are calling to him from out the golden gates, "Come unto Him all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and He 'will give you rest.'" If his feet have lost their swiftness, and his hands forgotten their cunning, he cares not; for the "Everlasting Arms" are bearing him up along the mountain path, and the hands which can no longer work shall be sustained by angels, as he spreads them out in prayer. We do not sympathize with a tired runner when he has all but reached the goal; we do not pity the storm-tossed mariner when he is in sight of his harbour; we cannot mourn over the

in-gathering of the promised harvest ; we cannot lament when the sun-fed fruit ripens to its fall.

These veteran warriors have come victorious out of the battle, in which we have still to engage ; these noble heads, once pricked with thorns, are wearing now the glorious crown which we pray to win ; these happy pilgrims, though footsore and weary, are singing the songs of Zion, for they are in sight of the golden gates ; they are nearly “come to the Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, and to Jesus the Mediator of a better Covenant.” Out of sorrow, they come to joy ; out of weariness, to eternal rest ; out of strife, to peace for evermore ; out of darkness, to the glorious undying light of the perfect day.

Let us, who are growing old, look back for awhile along the path we have trodden, and trace God’s love and mercy to us in every step of our journey, so that when we have reached the Home of God, we may leave behind us some stations of the Cross, some way-marks to guide those who have the journey all before them, that they too may press on bravely towards the “city which hath foundations, whose Builder and whose Maker is God.”

“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God.”





# Contents.

---

	PAGE
Introduction - - - - -	ix.
CHAPTER I.	
Looking Back - - - - -	1
CHAPTER II.	
Mercies of God - - - - -	6
CHAPTER III.	
Joys Past and Gone - - - - -	13
CHAPTER IV.	
Friends of Former Days - - - - -	18
CHAPTER V.	
Past Sorrows - - - - -	24
CHAPTER VI.	
Onward and Upward - - - - -	30

## CHAPTER VII.

The Desire Accomplished - - -	PAGE 36
-------------------------------	------------

## CHAPTER VIII.

Home in Sight - - -	45
---------------------	----

## CHAPTER IX.

Through the Valley - - -	51
--------------------------	----

## CHAPTER X.

The Mount of God - - -	60
------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XI.

Welcome to the Weary - - -	69
----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XII.

Rest - - -	75
------------	----





## CHAPTER I.

---

### Looking Back.

---

“Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ;  
now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I  
am known.”—I COR. XIII.

“Who of God is made unto us wisdom.”—I COR. I. 30.

YES ! we look back all through our past lives, and we see it all so clearly now. From the mountain path that we are treading, we have such a fine, clear, open view of all that lies behind us in the valley below. We can see where the ground rises and where it falls, we can trace the windings of the river from its source in the distant hill-side spring, to its meeting with the sea ; we can see where the wilderness has become a fruitful field, and blossomed as a garden of the Lord, or where what once was a fruitful field has been destroyed

and become like a barren desert. We can see trees which we planted, now beginning to rear lofty heads, and to give shelter to the parched earth; we can find out in the landscape, waste and desolate places which might have been cultured, and made good for the service of men; we can also see that some land on which we thought it useless to labour more, so disheartened we were at its hardness and impenetrability, has at last begun to look green, and to give promise of a good harvest.

We can now, as we look down upon them, see the direction of the roads so plainly. There they lie before us like white threads in the landscape. We see which are straight, and which are devious, which lead up to the mountain, and which lead down to the sea; which are plain and open to the light, and which are closed in and hidden with thick bushes and trees. Before we climbed so high, these roads used to puzzle and perplex us. We could not understand why this one should go over the brow of the hill, and why that one should wind

along, following the course of the river; but now it is all so simple and so clear. What seemed to be the longest way, was really the shortest; what seemed to be winding and tortuous, was really the most direct.

There it all lies below and behind us. Such a beautiful picture when we pause and turn round to look at it! So beautiful because the setting sun is shining into every corner of it, and lighting up even the dark and desolate spots into warmth and glow and beauty.

“At eventide there shall be light.”

In the evening of life we are bathed in the light of the Knowledge and Wisdom of God, which shine over every little circumstance of our past history, and make so clear and simple to us, that which we could not understand before. Shall we not rejoice in this light, and thank God for it?

The road used to seem so long and weary, so needlessly steep and difficult, but now we see that it was the most direct; after all, quite the best way we could have gone.

We were ignorant and foolish, but now we

begin to know and to see the Wisdom and the Greatness of God. We see that He never sent us one trial that did not also bring a blessing with it, not one grief that did not lead us to greater joy, not one night of weeping that was not followed by a morning of gladness.

Never let it be said of the servants of God that old age is a gloomy and desponding time to them, or that they can no longer be wise in their generation. They are bright with the accumulated rays of their past experiences; they are wise with the added wisdom of lifelong studies of the Wisdom and the Works of God.

Let all who are crowned with the grey hairs gathered in the Service of God, rejoice in the wondrous Wisdom of God as shown in their own lives, and let it be the final effort of the end of their pilgrimage, to point with the staff they are just going to lay down, to the beautiful picture of the Works of God in their souls, and to speak to those who follow them of their thankfulness to Him Who had so abundantly fulfilled the Word He had spoken to them in

their youth, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

"Brighter still, and brighter  
Glow the western sun,  
Shedding all its brightness  
O'er our work that's done ;  
Time will soon be over,  
Toil and sorrow past—  
May we, Blessed Saviour,  
Find a rest at last."



## CHAPTER II.

---

### Mercies of Old.

---

"He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

ISA. LXIII. 9.

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old."—ISA. XLIII. 18.

"O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth."—PS. LXXI. 17.

"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto Thee; and my soul which Thou hast redeemed."—PS. LXXI. 23.

THERE is no thought surely which is so full of rest and comfort to both old and young, as the remembrance of the goodness of God to us personally, as shown in all the separate events of our lives. Thankfulness is a frame of mind which blesses those who have it, as well as those towards whom it is shown. It is a happy state of mind, and one which God loves well.

Therefore, when we feel weary with our long journey, as the evening shadows begin to fall, it is so good for us to think over all the helps that God has given us by the way.

When you are weary you lose courage, you lose heart, you lose strength to persevere, you are afraid to stem the mountain torrent that rushes across your path, you have no power in your feeble limbs to climb the steep ascent on the further side.

Where is your faith? Pause awhile, dear pilgrims, and think ; “ consider the days of old and the years that are past.”

Other and mightier streams have crossed your path before, who was it that led you through the deep as through a wilderness?

When you lost your way, and wandered miserably in a barren land, who was it that so lovingly called you back, it may be by the sweet sound of the old church bells, or by the remembrance of a mother’s prayer, or by the sight of some humble shrine from which the tender Master’s Face, lit up by the glow of the evening

sun, looked on you, as of old on S. Peter in his sin?

Who is it that carrieth the lambs in His bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young? Who is it that sent the sunshine and the rain in their season, and fed the young ravens that called on Him? Has He forgotten to be gracious? As you think over all His mercies to you in the time past, your strength will be renewed, the heavenly sap will rise from your grateful hearts, and feed with new life and beauty, the feeblest members that you have.

Life is often very trying to elderly people because of its perpetual restlessness, and noise, and tumult, and strife of tongues.

This is all so out of harmony with them—they have gone through it all, and have seen how it all ends—a thing that is turning the world half crazy one day, is forgotten the next, and some other equally short-lived excitement has jostled its predecessor out of the way, to be itself overwhelmed and trodden under foot in its turn, by the next thrilling subject



of interest which fills the journals of the day, and sets men's tongues in motion. They have watched the very brief course of thousands of these excitements in their time. They have seen them in politics, in commerce, in the Church, and they have seen them vanish into thin air, hardly leaving a trace of where they were, and they have seen that the world goes on without seeming to be either the better or the worse for the passing agitation, which at the time threatened to make "all things new." They have seen it, and they are weary of it. They cannot sympathize with, and they are intensely wearied by, all such excitements now, and their longing to escape from the incessant noise sometimes makes them petulant with those who are in the thick of the tumult, and who fail to understand how anyone, be he young or old, can fail to take a deep interest in what they consider so vital a matter.

Is it not then a rest to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day, to remember even in the midst of the tumult, and to say to

ourselves, "How good God has been to me?" A feeling of repose comes with the very sound of the words, and hushes into silent thankfulness all irritable and impatient thoughts.

Yes, we have been through it all, we have joined in the tumult, we have added our voices to the uproar, but God has "borne and carried" us safely over it, He has taught us the vanity of all the vain disputings of the market-place, and has led us up the shady mountain path out of the noise, where we can listen to His voice. Think over His goodness to you all your journey through.

Let us not heed the noise outside, when we have such a restful thought within. Let us go out of the heat and strife into the inner tabernacle of our hearts, and there call to mind the mercies of God to us in old days, His goodness and loving-kindness to us, from our youth up until now.

This is a joy apart from the world. Each heart alone knows the goodness of God which has illumined all its life. No stranger intermeddles with this joy. No meditations can be

more profitable, than to think over and count up again and again the many special mercies of our lives. Surely, if we do this, it will steady our nerves, relieve our hearts so much, that we cannot seem to others to be unsympathetic or hard.

We are always drawing from a secret well of sweet waters of comfort, and we can afford to look brightly on the agitation and tumult, we know to be so trifling, and to say to those who are engulfed in the whirlpool, Be of good courage, God has rescued us from many such, and He will shelter you.

No, you are not going "down hill," you are pilgrims going up and up, ever higher and higher, towards the City which God has prepared for you. You turn round sometimes and look back along the way you have come, because you love to look on the beautiful works of God, and then you go on again cheered and strengthened by the sight of all His past mercies to you.

"Truly God is loving unto Israel, His mercies are over all His works."

“All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and  
Thy saints give thanks unto Thee.”

“When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I’m lost  
In wonder, love, and praise.”



## CHAPTER III.

---

### Joys Past and Gone.

---

"Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away."—Ps. CXLIV. 4.

"I am gone like a shadow when it declineth."—Ps. cix. 23.

"My glory was fresh in me; and my bow was renewed in my hand."—JOB XXIX. 20.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."—Ps. IV. 7.

CHILDHOOD, and youth, and manhood, are times of joy, as morning and noonday are times of light, yet in a Christian old age there is a far greater joy, a joy "unspeakable and full of glory," as there is at eventide, a richer fuller glow of light, than that which heralds the rising of the sun.

Is it sad to think of the past joys of life? Nay, it is most cheering and comforting to do so. As with the mercies, so with the glad and

joyful memories of the earlier stages of our pilgrimage: it is well to think often of them, and to bless God for every bright and happy day we have spent.

Those days helped us on our way so much. Just as the light and warmth of the sun nourish into life and beauty the tender plants and flowers, so our whole nature received fresh life and vigour and healthful glow from the joys of our happy youth and manhood.

Don't you, who are crowned with the snows of age, love to think and to talk of your school days, of your college days, of your first experiences as a subaltern, of your first long sea voyage? Don't you laugh once again at the jokes that amused you then, at the scrapes you fell into, at the battles you lost and won?

Don't you still grow quite pathetic over the love story of your life, though it happened so long ago? It is a joy even to remember and recall the happiness of having a heart that beat in union with your own, and filled your days with bliss.

Don't you cherish the fond memory of the

happy sound of children's voices in your house, and the joyous patter of little feet about your path? It is a joy to you now, old and feeble as you are, to see the little ones, and hear their laughter ringing through the air, because it is the echo of one of the greatest joys that lit up with brightest sunshine the days of your own youth.

Shall the grey heads droop and pine when they think of the joys that are gone? No, no. "Look up, and lift up your heads, for yours shall be the fulness of joy for evermore." Sweet as are the memories of your past joys, they cannot be compared with the joys that are to come.

The joys which lighted up the early stations of our pilgrimage, are all past and gone—the kind eyes have long since given us their last fond look—the hands can feel our clasp no more—the sound of the little pattering feet is gone, the childish voices are silent. Earnest, careworn men and women come round us now in the place of sunny-haired, joyous boys and girls—many places are vacant, never again to

be filled on earth—the grass grows long on many a grave we sigh to think of, the marble slab but faintly tells the tale of our bereavement, so long ago it happened.

But “God is faithful,” “He is our Father,” “He doth not willingly afflict.” Every joy which He has given and taken away, He will give again, shining with a lustre far brighter than before, in the Realm of the Perfect Day—true, your beauty is gone, your strength is gone, the music has left your voice, your hand has lost its cunning, but God has given you in their stead, an undying beauty, born of holy meditation, and strength of mind and heart to serve Him, so that in His service you can “walk and not be weary, you can run and not faint.” Yea, your strength is renewed as an eagle’s that can soar nearly to the sun; He has taught your aged lips to sing of His word, in notes of such melody as you never warbled in your youth; He has strengthened the “feeble knees” to worship Him with a “holy worship,” and has lifted up in His praise the “hands” which “hung down.”



Then let us praise Him and His faithfulness :  
“Unto Thee will we sing upon the harp, O Thou  
Holy One of Israel.” Though the spring and  
summer of our days are gone, and the eventide  
has come, the sky is radiant with the glory of  
the setting sun, the fields are beauteous in the  
mellow light of its parting glow, while with  
joyful lips His saints shall praise Him Who is  
the “joy of all nations,” and in Whose presence  
only “there is the fulness of joy for evermore.”

“Bliss, all bliss excelling,  
When the ransomed soul,  
Earthly toils forgetting,  
Finds its promised goal ;  
Where in joys unheard of,  
Saints with angels sing,  
Never weary raising,  
Praises to their King.”



## CHAPTER IV.

---

### *Friends of Former Days.*

---

"We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the House of God as friends."—PS. LV. 14.

"Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled."

S. MATT. XXVI. 56.

"There is a Friend which sticketh closer than a brother."

PROV. XVIII. 24.

THERE are bitter memories in our minds as well as sweet ones, when we think of our past friendships. How many so-called friends have proved quite unworthy of the name.

We can perhaps remember one who bore witness against us, one who deceived us, one who led us into trouble, one who supplanted us and robbed us of the love of a heart we longed for, one who refused us help in our poverty, one

who declined to nurse us in our sickness, many who were ashamed of us and fled from us when disgrace fell on us, and calumny spoke in malicious slander against us ; many even worse than these, who crowded round us when we were rich and prosperous, to make the most they could out of our prosperity.

Ah ! what painful memories these ! let us not dwell on them, except just to remember that He Who lived on earth to bear all our sorrows, knew well this sorrow too. He had but a little band of only twelve close friends. Of these, one betrayed Him, one denied with oaths and curses that he knew Him, and the rest all forsook Him in His hour of darkest peril, forsook Him, and fled from Him.

If our blessed Lord could not secure the faithfulness of the few who followed Him, can we be surprised when we look back and see how many that began life's journey with us, and walked at our side, fell away before even we began to climb the mountain sides.

It was good for us that so it should be. When earthly friends are taken from us, we look in

our despair to the Friend, Who "sticketh closer than a brother." He will never leave us nor forsake us. Our outward circumstances can make no change in Him.

Often we are surprised to find that a companion of whom we thought nothing, whose presence we hardly noticed, much less valued, has proved the truest of them all. So it is with our dear Lord—He has been close to us when others left us, He has helped us when others would not listen to our cry, He has cheered and comforted us, when others made a mock at our distress, though we saw Him not.

We have often had occasion to say, "Save me from my friends;" we have learnt the bitter truth that the "friendship of the world is enmity against God."

These are some of the dark places in the landscape we look down on, as we ascend the mountain path.

But there are bright spots, too, in amongst the dark ones. We must remember, and cherish with deepest thankfulness, the kind, and loving, and *true* friends that God gave us to help us

on our way—they were not very many perhaps, but how they helped us on! How cheering was their society, how helpful their advice, how salutary and bracing their criticism and censure!

How much our dear Lord loved His friends, feeble and unstable as they were. How He sought their company, took them with Him wherever He went, shared in their sorrows and joys, prayed for them, protected them from danger when He was Himself in the greatest peril, “If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way.”

He wept over the grave of Lazarus, He washed His disciples’ feet, He drove out of Mary Magdalen the seven evil spirits who led her captive at their will, He stilled the tempest when those who were with Him were in fear of death, He thought of them to the very last, in the bitter agony of the Cross. In that supreme moment of His dying agony, He pitied the sorrowing heart of His loving friend, and committed to him the keeping of the nearest and the dearest of His earthly friendships. Almost His latest

breath went forth in words of deepest love to the Blessed Mother who wept for Him, and to whom, for thirty years of His life, He had lived in holy subjection and obedience. The sword *must* pierce her heart He knew, for she, like Him, must fulfil every letter of the Word of God, but the holiest and sweetest of the sons of the Church should be given her, to comfort her, by the dying command of the Son she adored, in Whom her "spirit rejoiced" as her "Saviour and her God."

This God has been our God, our Guardian, and our Guide, all our journey through.

He has not left us friendless and alone. "Blessed be His holy Name for ever and ever."

"O Jesus, I have promised  
To serve Thee to the end,  
Be Thou for ever near me,  
My Master and my Friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
If Thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway  
If Thou wilt be my Guide.

“O let me see Thy footmarks,  
And in them plant mine own,  
My hope to follow duly,  
Is in Thy strength alone.  
O guide me, call me, draw me,  
Uphold me to the end,  
And then in Heaven receive me,  
My Saviour and my Friend.”



## CHAPTER V.

---

### Past Sorrows.

---

"I found trouble and sorrow ; then called I upon the Name of the Lord."

"For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted ; but when he cried unto Him, He heard."

"I am He that comforteth."—Is. LI. 12.

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."—Ps. LIII. 3.

As we pause on our journey and look back, the memory of many sorrows comes to us, but the setting sun is shining so brightly over the sorrowful spots in the picture, that somehow they don't look sorrowful now.

There are many worse things to remember than the past sorrows of our journey through life ; and the reason is, that "man's necessity is ever God's opportunity," and our times of grief and sorrow are just the seasons of God's special nearness to us, the seasons when He



makes Himself more fully known to us, when He folds about us His Everlasting Arms, and pours forth His most abundant blessings on our souls—therefore our saddest memories are *not* the memories of our sorrows.

The path was very steep at certain stages of it, very difficult, very rough. The thorns pierced our weary feet as we went along, the stones cut them and made them bleed, briars and thorns stopped the way, and many a terrible bruise and scratch were given us as we made a way through them. But our staff was in our hands, the staff in the form of a Cross, the “staff” of life, the “rod” that blossomed like a rose. “*Thy rod and Thy staff they comforted me.*” “I trusted in Him, and was holpen, I put my trust in Him, and He delivered my soul.”

The sorrowful spots on our path are all brightened by the shining footsteps of our dear Lord. The path of sorrows is pre-eminently His own way, the way that He trod on the whole of His journey, from the Manger to the Cross.

And you would have been no children of His if you had not followed Him along the path of sorrows. You trod it first unwillingly, but when you saw that He went on before, you gained courage, and went fearlessly on, heeding not briars or thorns, so that only you might struggle on, and reach your Saviour's side. And when you had found Him, then this path of sorrows became to you the garden of the Lord. You can say with all your heart, "O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou showed me, and yet didst Thou turn and refresh me."

Ah! volumes might be written about the refreshment which our Loving Master provides for those who patiently follow Him. No waters are so sweet and clear and refreshing to the soul as the "waters of comfort" which spring forth in the path of sorrows when Jesus touches the rock; no bread can strengthen man's heart like the Bread when the Lord blesses and breaks it, and fills the hungry soul with gladness; no wine can so light up with joy the countenance of a man, as the Precious Blood of

Jesus, with which the path of sorrows is besprinkled; no flowers can fill the air with sweeter fragrance, than the glorious Rose of Sharon, which ever blossoms in the way of the Cross, and where but in the way of "many sorrows," can we find the beautiful Lily, whose grace and sweetness have been the solace of myriads of wounded hearts, since the great consummation of all human sorrow on Calvary.

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," and as we look back we see in every rocky, toilsome place in the journey, a shining Cross, in every barren and desert place, the shadow of the Cross, Jesus, the Beginning and the End of our pilgrimage, the Rock to which we clung when the waves of sorrow threatened to engulf us, and the deep waters of the proud came over us, even over our souls!

If the memory of sorrow is to us an especial reminder of the love of the "Man of Sorrows," shall we not "count it all joy?"

There is only one kind of sorrow which pains us when we look back at it, and that is the memory of *sin*. It must be a pain and grief

we shall carry with us to the very gates of Paradise, to think of the many times when we have grieved our loving Lord, and “put Him to an open shame.”

“In all our affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved us;” and yet we murmured against Him in the wilderness, and grieved Him in the desert—He called us to choose between the evil and the good, and we wilfully forsook Him, how many times and often, and followed the leading of our sinful desires.

Yet He forgave us, and led us again and again into the right way, and though we refused so many times to listen, His loving voice still sounded above the roaring of the waters, and called us to repentance, and to peace. “I, I am He that comforteth.”

So even our sins need not grieve us if we have firm hold of Him Who came to save sinners.

True we have “crucified the Lord afresh;” we have chosen Barabbas, and rejected Jesus our Saviour, crying aloud with instant voices, “His Blood be on us, and on our children;” and in answer to our angry cry, He has washed

us and made us white in His most Precious Blood, and we are saved from wrath through Him.

Therefore if we remember our sins with sorrow, let us remember them with thankfulness too, deep thankfulness to Him, Who, even when we betrayed Him, and denied Him, and crucified Him, pleaded before God our ignorance as a merciful excuse for our sins, and cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"When wounded sore, the stricken heart  
Lies bleeding and unbound,  
One only Hand, a pierced Hand,  
Can salve the sinner's wound ;  
'Tis Jesus' Blood that washes white,  
His Hand that brings relief,  
His Heart is touched with all our joys,  
And feels for all our grief."



## CHAPTER VI.

---

### Onward and Upward.

---

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before."

"I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—PHIL. III. 13, 14.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrines of Christ, let us go on to perfection."—2 COR. XIII.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."—PS. CXXI. 1.

Now we must go on our journey, on and on straight forward, and look back no more. Memories of the past, former friends, and joys, and sorrows, all must be forgotten in the eagerness with which we grasp our staff and press on, ever onward, ever upward, along the shining path of the just which leads to the beautiful city God has prepared for us, in the light of the Perfect Day.

You toil on, footsore, perhaps, and weary, O pilgrims, but with faces set towards Zion, and lit up with the shining light of the path before you. No looking back now, no going down hill, no standing still, no hesitation as to which way you are to go.

You have often been puzzled in former days. The paths looked all so much alike, so many difficulties seemed to surround the one you were treading, while others diverging from yours, seemed so easy and so pleasant—yes, many a time you have turned aside to try these different ways, and have found your mistake, and have had to fight your way back again, at the cost of grievous wounds and bruises, but all this is over now. Your road lies all plain and sunny before you, uphill indeed it lies, and somewhat steep, but your staff is strong, and bears you up, your rod seems heavy, but as you carry it, it breaks forth into buds, and blossoms in your hands. When you are hungry the Bread of Heaven is your Food; when you are thirsty, out of the hard rock waters spring forth, and “streams in the

desert." You are so near to God, you take all from Him—you can no longer work for your daily bread, and He gives you manna to eat—you have barely strength to touch the Rock in the weary land, but He causes the fountains to break forth, and leads you beside the still waters—you cannot now drag your feeble steps to the Altar of God, but He comes and makes His Tabernacle with you. His Presence goes with you, as a pillar of fire by night, to light you on your way, as a sheltering cloud by day, to shield you from the "blast of the terrible ones," who would pursue and ruin you if they could.

"He sitteth between the cherubim, be the people ever so impatient." You have come out of the noise and tumult of the lower world into the great silence and stillness of the Presence of God. He has hidden you "secretly in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues;" His loving voice is ever speaking to you.

"I have holden thee by thy hand, thou art Mine."

Shall we say for a moment that old age is



sad or sorrowful, or to be pitied or deplored ? Nay, rather, we may well envy those who have come *out* of tribulation, and have so bravely mounted the path of light, till they are within sight of the city where they would be.

“When bright’ning, ere it die away,  
Mounts up their altar flame,  
Still tending, with intenser ray,  
To Heav’n whence first it came.

“Say not it dies, that glory,  
’Tis caught unquenched on high,  
Those saint-like brows so hoary  
Shall wear it in the sky.

“No smile is like the smile of death,  
When all good musings past,  
Rise wafted with the parting breath,  
The sweetest thought the last.”

God has led you and guided you all the way, and now He has brought you to the brink of Jordan, and His Hand holds back the mighty waters that you may pass safely through. What is there to fear ? for you have triumphed gloriously in His strength ; your enemies are all

conquered ; your journey is ended ; Canaan is in sight ; you have already seen and tasted the wondrous fruit that grows in the garden of the Lord ; you may soon lay aside your staff, and scrip, and shoes—they will not be needed long. Lay down all that has burdened you on your journey, and press on with renewed strength, with hearts full of thankfulness and praise, to the golden gates of the City of Peace, in the Land of Perfect Day.

You draw near to God, fed and nourished by Him as trees which He hath planted ; your dear Lord and Saviour walks at your side, and holds your hand in His that was pierced for you ; the Holy Spirit, like a dove with silver wings, ever brings sweet messages of peace to your soul, and kindles into intenser heat and glow, the fervour of your love and joy in God, as with a tongue of fire ; while all around and about you floats the “great cloud of witnesses,” who joy and rejoice over you, as you mount up, ever higher and higher, to the city of your King. Blessed are ye of the Lord. Praised be His Holy Name.

“O happy band of pilgrims,  
If onward ye will tread,  
With Jesus as your fellow,  
To Jesus as your Head.

“O happy band of pilgrims,  
Look upward to the skies,  
Where such a light affliction  
Shall win so great a prize.”



## CHAPTER VII.

---

### *The Desire Accomplished.*

---

“He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.”

Ps. CXLV. 19.

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life.”—PROV. XIII. 12.

THE wise man tells us that the desire accomplished is a “tree of life.”

It is strange, as we get on in life, to look back to all we used to wish for. When we were young we were always wishing and longing for something, and now we are old, the habit still clings to us, but the nearer we get to the dear city where we hope to rest, the less desire we have for any of the things of earth, and all our wishes and longings are concentrated into the one supreme aspiration of the soul, to see Him

face to face, Who is the "desire of all nations," and in Whom alone, the soul can be *satisfied*.

Beautiful indeed it is to trace the course of the wishes that soared up to Heaven in the form of *prayers*. Such wishes could not be idle, for nothing ever yet went up to God from man, without returning as a benediction on him who sent it, even as the rivers that run among the hills, mount up in misty clouds to Heaven, and turn again in the gracious drops that water the earth, to make it very plenteous.

Perhaps you did not see this at the time you poured out the longing of your soul before God. You thought your prayer had failed to pass through the golden gates, and had brought no answer down, but now you know that one of the brightest rays of light that is illuminating your shining path is the memory of the blessedness of the time spent in prayer.

No moments in all the past days of your pilgrimage are half so sweet to think of, as those that you spent *alone with God*.

It was before the Altar of God that you found Him to be your "exceeding joy." It was there,

in the silence of His Tabernacle, that you drank of the "waters of comfort," which have so "refreshed your soul."

It is a joy which old age cannot take from you, or earthly feebleness remove. All your life long, from the day you first heard of a Saviour's love, till the blessed moment in which you hear His welcome to Paradise sounding in your ears, above the notes of the angels' songs, you have been able to call upon God with your voice, and to lift up your soul to Him.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try,  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach  
The Majesty on High.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death;  
He enters Heaven by prayer."

The greatest lesson of all which God teaches His children is *confidence* in Him. It is the greatest, and it is the most difficult lesson to learn.

You see this now, by the light of Heaven, to which you are drawing near. You thought you had learned it early in your journey, you said always that you put your trust in God, but now you know that even at the end of your pilgrimage, you have not quite learned your lesson yet. Confidence in God implies certainly *loss of confidence* in ourselves. You knew not what to ask for, and it took you a long time to learn the one great prayer, which, like the incense, carries with it all other prayers, through the gate of Heaven right up to the Throne of God—the prayer which Jesus poured forth in the silence of Gethsemane, “Not My will, but Thine be done.”

Sweet to the soul is the “desire accomplished,” the scheme successfully carried out, the victory won, the work well done, the journey come to an end; but sweeter far is the rest of that soul, which has learned to trust in the Lord, and to know no will but His.

You who have reached the brink of Jordan can speak to those that come after, of the way in which your loving Master has fulfilled all

your desires, more than satisfied you, far surpassed your highest imaginations.

He has fulfilled your desires sometimes when you knew it not, fulfilled them in a way you never dreamed of, or wished, but which you see now to have been the best and the happiest you could have asked for. Sometimes He has fulfilled some desire of your hearts by taking it away, and giving you instead of it that precious gift of confidence in God, which has brought you to perfect peace, and filled your soul with joy.

You see, too, in your past history some desires which were granted to your too urgent *self-will*, and which have not proved to be the blessings you expected them to be—you desired a king who should reign over you, and exercise a visible sway, in the place of the invisible and all-directing Providence of God; your prayer was heard, God gave you the king, but distress and trouble were the result of the fulfilment of your wish. You asked for a place in the kingdom, especially near the throne—your prayer was answered by the gift of a martyr's crown.



You refused to be satisfied with bread, and prayed for meat instead—God heard the prayer, and the meat you had prayed for turned to bitterness in your mouth.

It remained for Him Who was equal with God, and Who was God Himself, to teach us how our will, being free, could be, by the Spirit of God, so conformed to the will of God, that we should cease even to *wish* for that which He withholds from us.

“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?” “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.” Our dear Master was like us in this too, that He had great and fervent desires and longings just as we have, therefore see how, in this also, He is our Great Example. He pours forth to God the wishes of His human heart, but His prayers are wafted to God with the sweet incense of perfect obedience to His will.

You have told Him as you came along, the trials which beset you, and the snares which you only narrowly escaped; you have poured

out all your hearts before Him ; you have told Him always of little troubles as well as of serious ones ; you have cried to Him out of the darkness, in the tempest, in the storm-tossed vessel on the sea, and He has hearkened and heard you, because you had cast from you the burden which would have crushed you down, and left you at the mercy of the elements—the burden of *self-will*. The Lord loves us to tell Him of all that causes us sorrow or rejoicing, but when we tell Him, it must be with hearts cast down before Him in utter abandonment of self.

Dear pilgrims, is it not so? Has not self, with all its affections and lusts, been the worst enemy you have encountered by the way? Has not the struggle been a fierce one, even to the shedding of blood, in your battle with sin? Ah! that is true indeed, and you still bear traces of the conflict in many a wound and bruise, but so are you like your Holy Master. His Face is more marred than any of the sons of men ; He carries the traces of cruel scourgings ; His Hands and Feet are pierced with

nail-prints ; and in His Side is the mark of the spear. Even His Sacred Head bears the sign of the thorns which crowned It, and the scene of His last prayer is bright with the drops of His most Precious Blood, which fell from Him in the intense agony of supplication, that the will of God might be done here, on the earth which He made, and by the creatures of His Hand.

If your dear Master was so cruelly wounded, you could not *expect* to escape unscathed. He now wears in Heaven, as the brightest emblems of His glory, the wounds He bore for you, so shall you wear, as the brightest jewels in your Heavenly crown, the wounds you have gained for Him.

Your souls rejoice and sing with the joy of the "desire accomplished," for you are drawing daily nearer to your Lord and Master, and these are the words of your thankful song, bursting forth from loving hearts : " I have found Him Whom my soul longeth after. There is none upon earth that I can desire in comparison with Him."

“ O Saviour, precious Saviour,  
Whom, yet unseen, we love ;  
O name of might and favour,  
All other names above ;

“ In Thee all fulness dwelleth,  
All grace and power Divine ;  
The glory that excelleth,  
O Son of God, is Thine.

“ O grant the consummation  
Of this our song above,  
In endless adoration  
And everlasting love.

“ Then shall we praise and bless Thee,  
Where perfect praises ring,  
And evermore confess Thee  
Our Saviour and our King.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

---

### Home in Sight.

---

"He hath prepared for them a city."—HEB. XI. 16.

"Not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, . . . and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—HEB. XI. 13.

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."—HEB. XI. 10.

THE nearer we draw to the end of our journey the more curiosity and anxiety we feel about the place we are going to, especially when it is a city we have never seen before, towards which our way is tending.

We look out in the map for its exact position, its boundaries, its nearness to the coast, the rivers that traverse it, the mountains that surround it, the other towns of importance which are near to it.

We read any books in which there are descriptions of the surrounding scenery, or of the characteristics of the city itself : what buildings it contains ; what are its special articles of commerce, its industries and manufactures ; what are its educational advantages ; what its churches.

We try to make acquaintance with someone who is living there, that we may learn from them who are the principal inhabitants, and, if possible, to get an introduction to some of them. We ask about the libraries, the shops, and the market ; and by these enquiries we judge whether our home there, is likely to prove a happy one.

So with our journey to the City of God. We are homeless now, for we are only travellers, strangers, and pilgrims, passing on through a land that is foreign to us, to reach our own country. We do not wish to find a home in the country through which we journey. Our way lies through it, and that way we must go ; but its ways are strange to us, and we cannot understand or speak its language.

We do not mind whether we are comfortable or not in this foreign land : it is not our abiding place, what matters it ? We are only *passing through*.

The food may be bad, and the water scarce ; the sun may scorch, and the cold may try us as we go. What does it all matter ? It cannot be for long ; we are going on—we are going home.

The people of the strange country may look coldly on us, and turn from us, and refuse us even a cup of cold water as we go. What does it matter ? We are only passing through.

They cannot understand us, or they would perhaps treat us more kindly. We cannot understand them, or we should avoid doing things which might provoke their animosity. It does not matter ; it cannot really hurt us, we must leave them behind, and press forward on our way.

We are not alone. We are all travelling together, a happy band of pilgrims, united by a common love and devotion ; and we are led and guided by a Captain, Who is more to us than all the world beside. We have left all

to follow Him, and for His dear Sake we gladly count all else but loss.

He goes before us, bearing His Cross, and we follow as we can, often stumbling, sometimes falling, but still plodding on, helped and cheered by the Gracious Words He speaks.

Will you who are within sight of the city tell us what it is like, and who its inhabitants are? Are the gates open? Will our life be a happy one if we abide within its walls?

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither can the heart of man conceive what things God has prepared” for the children whom He loves.

The City cannot be described, because no human words can express the beauty and the glory of the mansions which God has prepared. God has given us a picture of our home, dim indeed, but how beautiful!

“God is in the midst of her,” and the Lamb is the “Light thereof.” It is watered by the beautiful stream of the river of life, which flows beneath its walls; and on the river banks, and fed by its waters, are the trees of the Lord’s



planting, bearing fruit which is the sustenance of all nations.

There is no Temple there, for those who dwell in the City of God worship without ceasing, before the Great White Throne. It came down from Heaven, this beautiful City of Peace, adorned as a bride to meet her loving Lord. Therein dwell all those who have come out of great tribulation, clad in white robes, and carrying palms of victory in their hands. All that is holiest and best on earth has found its happy consummation there. All who have gone before us, and attained their journey's end, are awaiting us there, the blissful company of the "spirits of just men made perfect." Angels and archangels strike their immortal harps there, and sing their adoring songs. Apostles, martyrs, prophets, and all the great company of the Redeemed are gathering there.

Its walls are Salvation, and its gates are Praise!

"O Heavenly Jerusalem,  
Eternal are thy halls,  
And blessed are the people  
That dwell within thy walls.

Thou art the golden mansion  
Where saints for ever sing,  
The seat of God's own chosen,  
The Palace of the King.

“There God for ever sitteth,  
Himself of all the Crown,  
The Lamb the Light that shineth,  
And never goeth down.  
Nought to this seat approacheth,  
Their sweet peace to molest ;  
They praise their God for ever,  
Nor day nor night they rest.”



## CHAPTER IX.

---

### Through the Valley.

---

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

PSALM XXIII. 4.

"That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—HEB. II. 9.

"Whosoever liveth and believeth on ME shall never die; Believest thou this?"—S. JOHN XI. 26.

DEAR pilgrims, your home is in sight, the beautiful city which God, in His love, has prepared for His children's resting-place, when their weary journey shall be ended.

You have only to cross the river, to pass through the valley, and you shall rest for evermore.

True, the river is wide and deep, and the valley is full of shadows; dark, strange, mys-

terious. You have to pass through it alone ; the nearest and dearest of your companions can but come with you to the river's brink ; there he must leave you "in the Hands of God."

Yes, your friends must say good-bye, and leave you, but never are you less alone than in this last strange stage of your journey to the City of Peace, for God is with you then, Jesus is more close to you than ever before, and where He will go with you, you need never fear to go. Now at last, is your will perfectly one with His, you have quite ended the warfare against self-will, which has been the hardest trial of your journey. You lie powerless, unresisting, in the "Hollow of His Hand." Why then should you faint or fear ? Is not this what you have longed and prayed for all the way you came along, that you might be His, His only, His for ever, body, soul, and spirit, altogether His ? He has answered your prayer, and now that your "warfare is accomplished," and your victory won in His strength, He will not keep you from your crown.

Never fear the river, or the dark mysterious valley ; only lie still, and put your trust in Him. He will hold back the waters for you, and the flood that threatened to engulf you shall, at the touch of His Hand, rise into a wall, to protect you on either side, and you shall pass safely through, "leaning on your Beloved." What can there be to terrify you ?

He asks you so lovingly, "Believest thou this," the blessed truth, that death is not death to the Christian, as men count dying ? No doubt this is difficult to believe, for death has always a terror for us, because of its strangeness and mystery. Nature recoils from the separation of soul and body ; it recoils, too, from anything which it cannot understand and explain ; and no one can explain what death is, because none have ever returned from the valley, and told the story of their sojourn there. The power of the Christian faith alone, can enable us to believe and to trust, in what we can neither see nor comprehend. It alone can so assure us of the Presence with us of our Lord, that we can feel that if only He holds our hand, we will go with

Him where He will; that no shadow can dismay us, for in His Presence is light; and that never will He be so close to us as then, for He has promised that when we “pass through the waters” He will be with us.

David looked calmly at the “valley” through which He was to pass. It is good and restful for us to meditate on it, for whatever may be the difference in the roads we each travel, through that valley, we one and all must pass, and pass alone, as far as any help from our fellow mortals is concerned, though, blessed be God, we shall not feel lonely then, for the Lord will be with us, as He was with the three holy Children in the fiery furnace. We cannot too often repeat this blessed truth.

The valley seems dark when you look down into it; it seems as if the sun could not ever reach its depths; it is a valley of shadows, dark and dim, and where no sun is, it must be damp and chill, but the Christian knows—oh! does he not? that where there are shadows there must be light too. The darker the shadow, the brighter the light behind it, and he knows

that to that glorious light, the valley of shadows will lead him.

So he walks bravely on, no haste, no hurry, no quickening of his ordinary pace. As he has walked calmly and patiently along the shining path of the just, so with the same patient, quiet trust in God, he will enter the valley of shadows. He will not fall into it, or run into it, but he walks on with the same firm tread that has carried him all along, and with his eyes ever trying to pierce through the darkness, as seeing Him Who is invisible.

Walking implies not only a steady pace, but an upright carriage; so through the mysterious valley, the Christian walks with head erect, presenting a bold front to the danger of the way. Upright always, he is upright now, for he walks *with God*, and he "fears no evil," the "rod and the staff," which have sustained his steps whenever they faltered in his long journey, are his now to comfort him, and give him strength and vigour on his way.

He feels through the darkness that the Lord is with him, He Who, though He made the

universe, yet condescended to tread the dark valley, and to leave in it traces of His passage, for the guidance of His children, for "He tasted of death for every man," and He has taken away its bitterness and its sting.

The valley is very quiet and still, full of shadows and deep mysteries, with no sound to break the profound silence of the shades—and quietness, and stillness, and silence, ever make the atmosphere in which God delights to dwell.

"The silence and helplessness of the grave are the profoundest homage to the Majesty of God." And yet, though we are all journeying on to this silent land, and we do not know how soon we may be called to pass through it, how little of its quiet pervades our daily pilgrimage! We all want to be constantly *doing*, working, talking, teaching. Even as we grow old, the ceaseless course of action must be kept up; we cannot learn that the Benediction of God rests on him who says, "I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is Thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety," and



that "in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength."

Will all our efforts add one cubit to our stature? Can our hardest work, and most active service, make us seem more than unprofitable servants in His sight, Whom legions of angels count it their greatest joy to obey?

The way we can honour Him most, is by lying still, by falling on our knees before Him with the utter helplessness of dying men. To try to enter into the stillness which surrounds the Throne of God, is the highest homage which we can pay to Him.

So your journey through the silent valley may be your last and sweetest act of worship to Him Who has been so good to you, dear pilgrims, and has blessed every step of your journey with His loving Presence.

He is *all-sufficient* to you now, but nevertheless it is sweet to think that among the clouds which overshadow the valley there are hovering those who "all died in faith," and have inherited the promises, and now are they witnesses of this last stage of your Heavenward journey, and

their prayers are with you as you go—the saints of God. As their glad anthems shall welcome you when the day dawns, and the shadows shall flee away for ever, so as loving friends unseen, they watch and pray for you, who are patiently trying to follow in their steps.

“Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Yes, dear Lord, for Thou art the “Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and we believe, we *do* believe, that when we die to earth, we shall live to Thee, and in Thee, for evermore.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.”

“Loving Shepherd of the sheep,  
Keep me, Lord, in safety keep :  
Nothing can Thy Power withstand,  
None can pluck me from Thy Hand.  
Loving Shepherd, Thou didst give  
Thine own Life that I might live—  
May I love Thee, day by day,  
Gladly Thy sweet Will obey.

“ Loving Shepherd, ever near,  
Teach me still Thy Voice to hear,  
Suffer not my foot to stray  
From the strait and narrow way.  
Where Thou leadest may I go,  
Walking in Thy steps below ;  
There, before Thy Father’s Throne,  
Jesus claim me for Thine own.”

---

“ Yes, Heaven is the prize,  
Death opens wide the door,  
And then the spirit flies  
To God for evermore.”



## CHAPTER X.

---

### The Mount of God.

---

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”—ISAIAH II. 2.

“And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.”—EZEK. XI. 23.

“And He carried me away in spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great City, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God.”

REV. XXI. 10.

“Her foundation is in the holy mountain.”

“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.”

PS. LXXXVII. 1, 3.

“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.”—ISAIAH LVI. 7.

Who can describe the delight of breathing the sweet fresh air of the mountain height after

the close damp atmosphere of the valley below? What pen can even portray the bliss of entering into the glow and warmth of the sunshine from the sombre darkness of the valley of shadows? Who can even dare to meditate on the transcendent joy of the ransomed soul which passes out of the valley of the shadow of death, leaning on her Beloved, into the refreshing breezes and glorious light of the Holy mountain of the House of God?

Mountains, like forests, seem ever to bring us near to God—they are so high, so lofty, so mighty in their grandeur. They are so far above all the littlenesses of our earthly welfare, so independent of anything man can do. As we look up to their vast height, we realize more perhaps than at any other time, our own immeasurable insignificance before Him Whose Hands made all these things, Who called the mighty hills into being by the Breath of His Mouth, and planted the lofty cedars of Lebanon.

As in the silent valley of shadows, so on the summit of the mountain, there is the impress of the deep mystery and silence which

surround the throne of God, but with this difference. In the valley there is the stillness of submission, and helplessness, and annihilation; on the mountain there is the stillness of awe, of worship, of adoring homage, to the Great Majesty of God.

The everlasting hills, too, teach us the lesson of the Eternity of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, I am God from everlasting and world without end."

Yes! these great hills have been the silent witnesses of all God's dealings with the world in which we live. No history but the chronicles of God's own Word can speak of their beginning. No record will ever be written of their end. Where they were brought forth at His Word, there have they stood through all ages, solemn and silent witnesses of the Eternal Life of God.

They speak to us, too, by their very silence, of the unchangeableness of God. As they were at the dawn of the first day, which came into being in answer to the Voice of God, so are

they now. Like Him, they change not. True, they answer to every varying ray of the sunlight which decks them, now in purple shadow, and again in golden radiance, or in the soft mystery of silvery clouds which veil their summits from its beams; but all these changing lights and shades are but the play of the sunbeams on the clouds of mist sent up by the rivers which run among the hills. They play round them, but they do not touch the mighty mountains, nor change their immoveable and invariable form. So are they beautiful emblems of the faithfulness of our God. We read of Him that He sometimes causes the "sunshine of His Face" to shine on us, that He "hideth His Face," that He is "provoked," that He is "pleased," that He is "at hand" and yet sometimes "far off," that He is a God "to Whom vengeance belongeth," and yet that He "is love" itself, but yet He changeth not. In Him is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." These varying lights and shades in His Countenance are but the effects of the meeting of the sunshine of His glory with the mists of human

desires, rising from the myriads of human hearts which He has made to run their little course at the mountain's foot. These aspirations rise to meet and mingle with the sunshine of His Love, and there distil, and drop, to water the earth with the gracious dew of the Benediction of God ; but they move Him not, nor change Him, for He is the same always, from everlasting, and world without end.

Dear pilgrims, you have climbed many a mountain in your journey through life ; you have seen all the beautiful lights and shadows, you have trodden with anxious feet the steep and barren paths, and looked down with terror into the precipice below. You have traversed the frozen billows of their seas of ice, you have stood among the eternal snows which crown their mighty peaks, but you have not seen, for mortal eyes can never see, the glorious Mountain of the House of God. To Enoch, to Elijah, and to the disciple whom Jesus loved and gave the care of His Blessed Mother, to these alone of mortal beings, was the vision of the City of God revealed, without their



passing through the valley of the shadows, by which our Lord Himself journeyed from Calvary to Paradise, and even S. John, whose life below must indeed have been a Heaven upon earth, did, after all his glorious visions were ended, follow his dear Master through the valley of death, though for him the clouds of shadow had been rolled away.

Only in imagination can you picture the glories of that holy mountain, till you have taken your lonely way through the depths of the valley's shades, and have left there all of earth that clung to you. "When this mortal shall have put on immortality, when that which was sown in corruption shall be raised in glory, then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Then there will be no more weary climbing up steep and narrow paths, but you shall soar as the eagles soar, on mighty pens, straight up towards the sun. No more weighed down by the burden of the flesh, you shall "run and not be weary, you shall walk and not faint."

No more depressed by earthly longings and

appetites, your soul shall rise to heights of adoring love, such as you never dreamt of here, and your voice, silent now to things of earth, shall be attuned to the harmonies of Heaven, and shall break forth into a sweeter song than angels know, for they know not the song of those who have been redeemed from sin and death by the Blood of the Lamb.

“Now are they before the Throne of God and praise Him for evermore in His Temple.”

“Who can paint that lovely city ;  
City of true peace divine ;  
Whose pure gates, for ever open,  
Each in pearly lustre shine ;  
Whose abodes of glory clear  
Nought defiling cometh near ?

“There no stormy winter rages ;  
There no scorching summer glows ;  
But through one perennial springtide  
Bloom the lily and the rose,  
With the myrrh and balsam sweet,  
And the fadeless violet.

“There no sun his circuit wheeleth ;  
There no moon or stars appear ;  
Thither night and darkness come not ;  
Death hath no dominion there ;  
But the Lamb’s pure beaming ray  
Scatters round Eternal Day.

“There the Saints of God, resplendent  
As the sun in all his might,  
Evermore rejoice together,  
Crowned with diadems of light ;  
And from peril safe at last,  
Reckon up their triumphs past.

“Happy he who, with them seated,  
Doth in all their glory share ;  
Oh ! that I, my days completed,  
Might be but admitted there !  
There with them the praise to sing  
Of my glorious God and King.”

---

“Jerusalem, thou city blest,  
Dear vision of celestial rest,  
Thy gates a pearly lustre pour ;  
Thy gates are open evermore ;  
And thither evermore draw nigh,  
All who for Christ have dared to die.

“ That home on high, it ever rings  
With praises of the King of kings ;  
For ever there, on harps divine,  
They hymn th’ Eternal One of time ;  
We, here below, the strain prolong,  
And faintly echo Zion’s song.”



## CHAPTER XI.

---

### Welcome to the City.

---

"The Spirit and the Bride say Come."—REV. XXII. 17.

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

S. MATT. XXV. 34.

You know what the beautiful city is like, at least you know it as far as anyone is permitted to know it before they see it for themselves, and experience the joys of dwelling there.

You have read in the Word of God the description of your home, and all the beautiful things you have read are most restful subjects of meditation to you on your pilgrimage.

You are getting sadly weary with your journey—it has been so long and so difficult, and your strength seems to be well-nigh gone. Though

the light is shining so brightly on the path before you, you are sometimes faint and heart-sick, and your courage fails ; but “look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” A very few steps more will bring you to the golden gates ; one more struggle, and you will have won the goal. Bear the Cross but a little further, and you shall exchange it for a Crown ; and the Hope and Faith which have helped you, and been to you as a rod and a staff to support you, shall be lost to sight, the sight of Him “Whom having not seen ye love, and in Whom, though now ye see Him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

You ask who will meet you in the city so strange to you ; who will receive you, and show you its wondrous streets of gold, and the river clear as crystal which is in the midst of her ?

Ah ! a glorious company indeed are waiting for you on Jordan's farther side. They are calling to you to “bring presents, and come into His Courts.” Bring to your God an offering of a free heart—a heart that praiseth

Him with joyful lips. Bring jewels of gold and raiment—the jewels picked up on the Jordan's shore, and raiment pure and shining, made white in the Blood of the Lamb. Cast down before Him the crown of your reason and self-will, and He will give you a crown of righteousness, that fadeth not away. A crown which He, your Lord and Master, has “laid up” for you, and kept it safe till you had climbed the mountain side, and crossed the swollen stream, and won your way safely to take it from His Hand.

A glorious company awaits you at Heaven's Gate, but foremost of all the shining throng is He, in Whose glorious Presence the others are all forgotten and unseen. Before Him even the angels veil their faces, and you, dear Pilgrims, when the Beatific Vision meets your enraptured view, will be too dazzled by Its splendour to see those who are standing round Him, Who is the “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End;” He that was slain, and is alive again, and liveth and reigneth for evermore.

Could your feeble gaze pierce the dazzling

clouds of glory, you would see surely her of whom our dear Lord took His human nature, which He now wears in Heaven. She would be ever nearest to Him, Who had found His first earthly home in her arms, and on her faithful loving breast. With her will stand the great company of those who are gone before, and are entered into their rest—

“Apostles, martyrs, prophets there  
Around my Saviour stand.”

All the multitude of the Heavenly host are there, waiting to welcome the weary pilgrims home, for we are told that there is joy among the angels of God over each one sinner that repenteth.

Think, too, of the sounds that will greet you when once the wide river lies between you and all the tumult of earth's noise. You can listen now to the music of the golden harps, and hear the angels sing. Ah! who can tell what that melody will be: what will be the uttermost point of unearthly sweetness that the harmony of the choirs of Paradise can reach?



There, too, you may hope to hear again the greeting of voices you have so sorely missed among the sounds of earth—dear voices, too pure and sweet for earth—who left you to join the Heavenly choir, and for whose accents your soul has longed with a longing that could hardly be borne. They are close to you now, greeting you with the love of old, telling you of the things of God ; and as you see your loved ones again, in the All-Glorious Presence of your Saviour and theirs, your soul may well lose itself in the radiance of its light, and peace, and joy.

“ My peace I give unto you. Come, ye blessed of My Father, come ye, come ye, even unto Me. I am He that comforteth. Ye shall be My people. I will be with you, and I will be your God.”

These are the words of Greeting that ring out clear and sweet, at the dawn of the Perfect Day ; they fill all the air, they sound over land and sea, they bid you to the Banquet of the Great King, they sound your note of welcome at the Gates of Heaven.

“Come unto Me, ye weary,  
And I will give you rest ;  
O blessed Voice of Jesus  
Which comes to hearts opprest.  
It tells of benediction,  
Of pardon, grace, and peace,  
Of joy that hath no ending,  
Of love which cannot cease.

“And whosoever cometh  
I will not cast him out ;  
O welcome Voice of Jesus  
Which drives away our doubt ;  
Which calls us very sinners,  
Unworthy though we be,  
Of love so free and boundless,  
To come, dear Lord, to Thee.”



## CHAPTER XII.

---

### Rest.

---

"There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God."

HEB. IX. 9.

"Come unto Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. II. 28.

THE very word *rest* has such a welcome sound in the ears of those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, that it speaks to every heart of itself. We all talk and think of rest as the very greatest boon, whatever our age and circumstances may be.

Like the idea of *beauty*, or pleasure, or happiness, the idea of rest takes a different form in every mind, according to the different tastes and characteristics of each person.

One idea of rest may be best described by

a quaint old epitaph, which I believe to be genuine, and which speaks volumes in a very few words—

“Don’t mourn for me now, don’t mourn for me never, I’m *going to do nothing* for ever and ever.”

I think there can hardly be anyone who does not feel some sympathy with this utterance of a tired-out soul. It is partly caused, no doubt, by a tired-out body, by a brain over-pressed, and yet obliged to work on; by nerves strained always to a tension, most wearing and painful; by growing feebleness of limbs, failing sight, a general sensation of utter unfitness to encounter the work which each day brings.

Oh! what a mercy to be out of it all! not to have to do anything any more, not to have to go anywhere, not to have even to think any more! This is the combination of feelings which makes it seem to be the very consummation of bliss: to “do nothing for ever and ever.”

But again, there are among the band of pilgrims, even among the aged ones, some whose

minds are so brave, and strong, and vigorous, some with energies so irrepressible, so bright and fresh, that such a rest as that of utter inactivity for ever, would have no attraction for them, but would rather be dreaded as dull and wearisome.

These stronger natures love work for its own sake, and especially they love to work for God. They are never weary of well-doing, for their love for, and interest in, their work, urges them on to yet further efforts, and, as brave soldiers to the last, they cheerfully carry their armour to the very gates of Heaven, and only lay it down with their lives.

Others there are, good patient souls, very dear to God, who abide patiently on His will in all things, content either to work or to rest as He bids them; willing to be rich or poor, sick or healthful, prosperous or the reverse, just as it shall please God. Yes, even ready either to live or die as He shall appoint, and to say, in every circumstance He ordains for them, "He doeth all things well; Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

These are they who please God in all things : the sweet incense from their altars of self-sacrifice rises ever in a grateful cloud to the Throne of God, and distils in the refreshing dew of the benediction of God, which makes their lives so beautiful and so good.

They would tell you that they needed no rest, they are not tired, nor weary, they can say, with S. Paul, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." They live to Him, and, when their time comes, in Him they will die.

These are the Saints. The world does not recognise them. In their own company of pilgrims, they are not thought much of : quiet people who go on slowly, and do not seem to make much progress, some call them cold, some think them dull, others accuse them of want of sympathy ; but in their lives there is already a foretaste of Heaven : there is in their simple lives a peace and rest which herald the time when they shall rest in the Lord.

For all the people of God a "rest remains" then, in the mansions prepared for them in the City of the Lord ; such a rest, or such

restful employment, as shall best suit the new spiritual life of each one.

The weary will find repose, for "He giveth His beloved sleep." The active will find continual happiness in the unceasing worship of the "Lamb that was slain," for we are told that they "rest not day or night" from their service of praise; and to those who have suffered here below in patience and in love, shall be given a joy which is too great for the heart of man to conceive, for we are told that "they shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

Can any imaginable bliss exceed that of an Eternity spent in the constant Presence of Him Who is "altogether lovely;" Him Who is our "joy and our crown of rejoicing;" Him Whom on earth we followed afar off, along the way of sorrows, by the thorny path, which His Footsteps lit up with a radiance from on High?

Dear Pilgrims, you have followed Him, and He has given you His last best gift—*rest*, eternal rest, in Him, in the Realm of the Perfect Day. Thanks be to God.

“ O what is this splendour that beams on me now,  
The beautiful sunrise that dawns on my soul,  
While faint and far off land and sea lie below,  
And under my feet the huge golden clouds roll ?  
To what mighty King doth this city belong,  
With its rich jewelled shrines and its gardens of  
flowers,  
With its breaths of sweet incense, its measures of  
songs,  
And the light that is gilding its numberless towers ?

“ See, forth from the gates, like a bridal array,  
Come the Princes of Heaven—how bravely they  
shine ;  
'Tis to welcome the stranger, to show me the way,  
And to tell me that all I see round me is mine.  
But words may not tell of the vision of peace,  
With its worshipful teeming, its marvellous fires,  
Where the Lord is at hand, and our sorrows all cease,  
And the gift has outbidden our boldest desires.”

—  
“ Jesu, in mercy bring us  
To that dear Land of Rest,  
Who art with God the Father,  
And Spirit ever blest.”  
—

Alleluia !







BV  
4580  
S62

Spey 473722  
The perfect day

MAR 12 '36

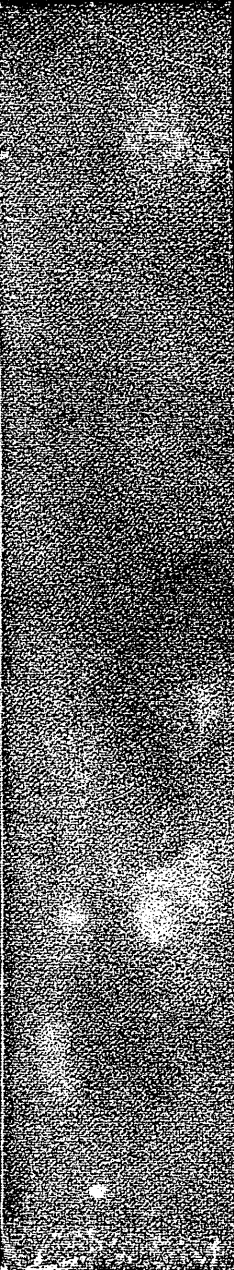
Ralph A. Holmes  
1- 2809

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

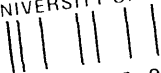


48 430 960

475-22



UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 430 960